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CONGRESS FEARS CRISIS IN AFFAIRS OF NATION

Question of Armed Merchantmen Absorbs Attention of Both Houses.

DEMOCRATS DECIDE TO MAKE CANVASS

Will Sound Sentiment of Body and Report to President With View to Securing Expression on New Decree of Central Powers.

Washington, Feb. 23.—Agitation in congress for action warning Americans off armed ships of European belligerents suddenly grew to such proportions today that the Democrats of the foreign relations committee voted to canvass the sentiment of the house on several pending resolutions of that nature.

Sentiment in the senate in favor of some such action also was openly expressed, but at the end of a day of surprises, tension and agitation such as had not been seen in congress in some time, the word came that President Wilson still was unalterably opposed to any such action by congress and believed that he would only be embarrassed thereby in the negotiations with Germany.

To widely circulated suggestions that the situation had reached a point where the president would lay it before congress, that Secretary Lansing might in some way define the attitude of the government in a communication to Senator Stone and that a time had been fixed within which the United States would expect Germany to signify her intention to abandon the announced plan to sink armed merchant ships without warning the statement was made officially that nothing has been determined upon, and that the situation, though grave, still was a waiting one, that no final position would be announced until Berlin was heard from.

The sudden developments at the capitol brought surprise to the administration leaders. While confronted with the possibility of congressional interference with all its aspects ranging from a defection from the administration policy to downright embarrassment of the president and the secretary of state, the leaders were confident they could control the situation and leave the executive branch of the government free to carry on diplomatic negotiations with Germany.

At no time today did the question come out openly on the floor of either the house or the senate, but about a score of congressmen who announced they were in favor of warning Americans, even if it involved a repudiation of the administration policy, if thereby they thought war would be averted, kept both houses in a state of tension that practically blocked business.

All the demonstration was in the Democratic ranks and there was no open show of sentiment among the Republicans. It was indicated, however, that Republican Leader Mann sympathized with President Wilson's policy and that any outbreak would have to reckon with his forces.

From apparently authentic sources came statements tonight that the president was determined that the dispute pending with Germany be settled without prolonged delay. He continues to believe that the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Germany means war, and there will be no undue haste in handling the situation involving such a possibility. The administration view is that a broad and important principle is involved in the right of Americans to travel on belligerent merchant ships and that right must not be abandoned. Developments are expected momentarily. Tomorrow may bring Germany's reply to the request of the United States made last week through Ambassador von Bernstorff for as-

SCORES ON MAN HUNT IN SOUTH MOUNTAIN

Charlie Mace of Burke County Shoots Wife and Then Disappears.

Morganton, N. C., Feb. 23.—Another horrible tragedy has been added to the already large list of the South Mountain section of this county, the wife of Charlie Mace having been shot to death by her husband, after he had driven his terrified children from the home Monday night. Scores of men are hunting Mace for whom a reward is offered.

As usual, the news was slow in coming in from this section. The children, it is said, spent the night out of doors and a neighbor was told Tuesday morning by Mace that his wife had killed herself. Asked why he had not notified anyone, he is reported to have said that he didn't "want anybody to know it."

The neighbor, however, notified others and the officers were informed. Sheriff Berry, Deputy Hallman and Pipkin went to the scene. Mace, seeing them approach, armed himself heavily and left. A little later his dog was placed on his scent and Deputy Pipkin caught sight of Mace and fired on him once, but the officer's gun was of too light a caliber to be effective at the distance. Mace then disappeared over a ridge and was gone.

The coroner's investigation showed that the wound was caused by a gunshot fired from a greater distance than would have been the case had there been a suicide and that an attempt had been made to fill the bullet hole with flour. It was also in evidence that Mace had threatened to kill his wife, and the children said that they had heard a scuffle and a shot, although they did not know that their mother was dead until the next morning.

Sheriff Berry sent an automobile back to town for more officers, organized a small posse and searched all of yesterday for the fugitive. Last night lookouts were posted on elevations where knowledge might be gained if Mace built a fire. At midnight Sheriff Berry returned to Morganton for more men and early this morning organized a posse of about 80, according to phone messages.

CUMMINS'S HAT IN THE RING

Candidate for President on Republican Ticket.

Des Moines, Iowa, Feb. 23.—United States Senator Albert B. Cummins, of Iowa, today filed affidavit with the Secretary of State as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States on the Republican ticket.

Similar affidavits will be filed in Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Montana, Oregon and Colorado. Local politicians received word today that the name of Senator Robert M. LaFollette, of Wisconsin, will not go before the Republican primary in this State in April.

"NO BILL" FOR DR. MADDOX

Union Doctor as Charged With Manslaughter.

Union, S. C., Feb. 23.—The grand jury here today returned a "no bill" in the case of Dr. Theodore Maddox, recently charged with manslaughter for alleged failure to properly attend young Hurley Stoddard, a boy accidentally shot by a companion.

Surances that the notice of intention to sink armed merchantmen without warnings after February 29 does not nullify previous pledges given in the Arabic and Lusitania negotiations.

Official advices from Berlin have indicated that Germany will reply that previous assurances will not be affected, but that they apply only to unarmed ships, and probably will ask the American government for its definition of defensive armament which may be carried by a merchantmen without sacrificing its peaceful character.

CHOSEN TO HEAD COKER COLLEGE

Dr. E. W. Sikes Elected President.

NOW AT WAKE FOREST

New Chief of Girls' School in Hartsville Has Splendid Attainments as Scholar.

Hartsville, Feb. 23.—At a meeting of the board of trustees of Coker College in Hartsville today, Dr. E. W. Sikes of Wake Forest, N. C., was unanimously elected president of this institution. Since the death of President Howard Lee Jones, last September, the trustees and friends of the college have been carefully considering the problem of securing a worthy successor to fill this important place. While many names of competent and distinguished men have been suggested no one has been offered the position until the election of Dr. Sikes.

Some of the friends of Dr. Sikes knew that he had recently visited Hartsville by invitation and had spoken at the First Baptist church and in the college auditorium and had made a most pleasant impression on the people. It was suspected that his was one of the names under consideration and rumor that it that Dr. Sikes had been elected and had accepted the presidency before the trustees met and took definite action in the matter. The action of the trustees today gave reality to what was before but rumor.

Dr. Sikes was graduated from Wake Forest college in 1891 with the M. A. degree. He afterwards continued his studies in Johns Hopkins university, and in 1897 received his Ph. D. degree from that institution. In 1898 he accepted a position in his alma mater as professor of political economy and has held that position now for 18 years. Dr. Sikes is also dean of Wake Forest college and is not only one of the most accomplished and valuable men of the faculty of that institution but very popular with the students. Dr. Sikes is also popular with the people of his native State, and has been a member of the North Carolina senate. He is a prominent and influential layman of the Baptist denomination and is in much demand for lectures and addresses on Christian education, Sunday school work and the Laymen's Missionary movement.

It is understood that Dr. Sikes will assume the responsibilities of his new position soon after the close of the present session of Wake Forest college. In the meantime the work of Coker college is being carried on in a highly satisfactory way by the present faculty under the supervision of the executive committee of the board of trustees. The work on the new buildings is progressing rapidly now and the future of the institution is bright with promise of increasing success and prosperity.

VETERANS TO GATHER IN ROCK HILL

Gen. B. H. Teague, for Old Soldiers. Accepts Invitation of The "Good Town."

Rock Hill, Feb. 23.—The United Confederate Veterans of South Carolina, will meet in this city, the invitation of the Rock Hill Chamber of Commerce, the U. D. C. chapters and citizens in general having been accepted by Gen. B. H. Teague in behalf of the Veterans. Late in April or early in May will be the time, the exact date will be fixed in a short time.

Blease Will Be Candidate Again.

Columbia, Feb. 22.—Cole L. Blease, former governor, announced definitely today that he will be a candidate for governor this summer.

He issued a statement, which is very mild, reiterating his old policies.

CAN'T ALLOW ABRIDGMENT OF RIGHTS

Wilson Makes Clear Position on Subject.

STANDS FOR LAW WITHOUT CHANGE

President Tells Congress America Must Be Ready To Uphold Rules.

Washington, Feb. 24.—President Wilson, at the end of two days of agitation in congress for action warning Americans off armed merchant vessels, wrote a letter tonight to Senator Stone, chairman of the senate foreign relations committee, stating that he could not consent to the abridgment of the rights of American citizens in any respect.

"The honor and self-respect of the nation is involved," he said. "We covet peace and shall preserve it at any cost but the loss of honor."

The president expressed hope that explanation of the declared intention of the central powers to sink armed merchant ships without warning would put a different aspect on a situation which now seemed to present insuperable obstacles. "We have had no reason to question their good faith or their fidelity to their promises in the past," he added, "and I for one feel confident that we shall have none in the future."

The letter was in answer to one written late this afternoon by Senator Stone outlining the situation existing at the capitol, where since yesterday morning persistent demand has been made for some action which might lessen the possibility of war between the United States and Germany. The president's statement will be repeated tomorrow to Speaker Clark, Representative Kitchin, majority leader, and Representative Flood, chairman of the house foreign affairs committee, who late today asked for an engagement in order to explain the position in which the house finds itself and asked the president for a statement of the administration's views.

PROTESTS AGAINST FEDERAL ACTION

Germany Claims Appam Exempt From Proceedings.

Washington, Feb. 23.—Formal representations were made to the state department today by the German embassy against the proceedings brought in the federal court at Norfolk to return the captured British liner Appam to her owners.

In a note presented by Count von Bernstorff, the German ambassador, it is contended that many precedents as well as the terms of the Prussian-American treaty provide that no legal action can lie against the Appam, held by a German crew as a prize of war, nor against Lieut. Berg, her commander. It is also contended that inasmuch as Lieut. Berg has extra territorial rights no legal action can lie against him.

The note suggests that when the case comes up in court, March 2, that the state department inform the court of the terms of the treaty.

Rome Celebrates Anniversary of Washington's Birth.

Rome, Feb. 23.—Washington's birthday was commemorated in Rome by the decoration of the leading hotels with American flags, although the visiting Americans at present number only a few hundred, whereas at this season many thousands of them usually throng the city.

A reception was held by Thomas Nelson Page, American ambassador to Italy at his residence, the Palazzo del Drago. It was largely attended by the diplomatic representatives of Chile, Argentina and Cuba being among those present.

CHARLESTON JURY BEGINS INQUIRY

Investigates Shooting in Committee Meeting.

Charleston, Feb. 23.—In handing to the grand jury in the court of general sessions this morning the indictments against Henry Brown and E. R. McDonald, charged with assault and battery with intent to kill, Solicitor Henry told the jury that during the shooting occurring in the city Democratic executive committee room at the time the defendants are charged with having committed assault and battery with intent to kill. A life was lost and he advised them to take up an investigation of the more serious crime first, fixing, if possible, the responsibility for the death of Sidney J. Cohen on some person or persons. After an exhaustive investigation of the more serious aspect of the affair the solicitor told the grand jury to then take up the cases in which assault and battery with intent to kill is charged.

Judge McLeod charged the jury with reference to the affair and stressed the need of the grand jury doing its full duty. He said the court would give all possible assistance and any necessary protection. Foreman Leland Moore of the grand jury suggested that the jury might need a stenographer in this investigation and was told by the court to go ahead and get all assistance needed. Foreman Moore also said that the jury would want the complete records of the testimony taken at the inquest that followed the killing of Mr. Cohen.

HISTORIC HOUSE BURNED.

"Dundora" Built by Thomas Jefferson, Destroyed.

Richmond, Va., Feb. 23.—"Dundora," a home built near Monticello, by Thomas Jefferson, for his nephew, Peter Jefferson Car, and latterly occupied by the family of the late John B. Moon, was destroyed by fire at an early hour this morning. The cause of the blaze is not known.

Mrs. Belle Maury and Misses Esther, Mary, Sallie, Agnes and Ann Moon, members of the family who occupied the house, escaped with only their clothing.

JANUARY COTTON EXPORTS

Decreased Forty Per Cent Compared With January, 1915.

Washington, Feb. 23.—Cotton exports for January decreased more than 40 per cent compared with January, 1915, and wheat exports dropped nearly 50 per cent, while exports of meat and dairy products increased appreciably. Department of commerce figures made public today show that compared with January, 1915, exports of cotton decreased from nearly \$60,000,000 to \$34,000,000; wheat from \$33,000,000 to \$17,760,000 and breadstuffs from \$55,000,000 to \$37,000,000. Meat and dairy products increased from \$18,000,000 to \$21,000,000, and mineral oils from \$8,700,000 to \$11,700,000.

BLOOD CIRCULATION SHOWN BY MOVIES

Microscopic Films At Last Taken After Several Months of Effort.

Battle Creek, Mich., Feb. 23.—Microscopic moving pictures showing blood circulation in humans have been completed at a sanitarium here under the direction of Dr. C. E. Stewart.

Ralph Devol, official sanitarium photographer, superintended the making of the films. These pictures, said to be the first of their kind, will show how the blood is circulated through the body, where how and why obstructions arise and the methods of treating poor circulation.

It took several months, under most trying circumstances, to produce these pictures. They are said to be exceptionally clear, and will be used in illustrating health talks throughout the country.

GERMAN CROWN PRINCE LEADING MIGHTY FORCE

Furious Engagement on Western Front With Great Fortress of Verdun Probably Teuton's Objective.

FRENCH ADMIT GERMANS HAVE MADE BIG ADVANCES

Italians Admit That at One Point Austrians Succeeded In Penetrating Their First Lines.

Troops belonging to seven army corps, under Crown Prince Frederick William, are engaged along a twenty-five-mile front north of Verdun in a desperate effort to drive back the French defending forces, probably with the capture of the great fortress of Verdun in view.

There had been very heavy fighting for a considerable period in this district of the French war zone, but within the last few days the attacks of the Germans have taken on added strength. The battle line has been extended and now reaches from Malancourt, on the west, to Etain, on the east, with Verdun in the center, only a few miles southward.

The Germans claim to have made important advances, and to some extent these are admitted by the French war office, which describes the battle as one of increasing intensity.

The German preparations were extensive and the bombardment of the French positions with thousands of shells was interrupted. As the French had foreseen this battle all their available guns were called into action and responded to the heavy shelling of the Germans.

While at some points the French were unable to resist the onslaught of the attacking forces, along much of the front, according to the Paris communication, the attacks were well sustained and very heavy losses were inflicted on the Germans.

Another British steamer, the Westburn, has put into port flying the German flag and with a German prize crew aboard. This vessel has reached Santa Cruz, Tenerife. She has on board 206 prisoners taken from various British vessels sunk by German raiders.

In the British Parliament Premier Asquith, in reply to questions concerning the possibility of peace, reiterated his former pronouncement that there would be no peace until conditions previously set down were met. These included the restoration of Belgium and Serbia and the overthrow of "Prussian militarism."

While President Wilson is declared to be unalterably opposed to any action by Congress with respect to warning Americans off armed merchantmen of the belligerent nations of Europe, agitation in Congress in this direction has grown to marked proportions, and Washington advices say that the Democrats of the foreign affairs committee had voted to canvass the sentiment of the House on pending resolutions bearing on that question.

The Administration leaders at Washington, it is further declared, are confident that they will be able to control the situation so that the executive branch of the Government may be free to carry on diplomatic negotiations with Germany.

On the Russian and Austrian fronts there has been considerable fighting, and the Italians admit that at one point the Austrians succeeded in penetrating their lines.

No late advices have been received from the Caucasus, where the Russians are continuing their pursuit of the retreating Turks.

Judge Peurifoy Sworn In.

Columbia, Feb. 22.—James E. Peurifoy was today commissioned as judge of the 14th judicial circuit. He took the oath of office before Associate Justice Hydrick, of the supreme court.